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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

THE NEED OF RELIGION—I*

(BY HAZRAT MIRZA BASHIR-UD-DIN MAHMUD AHMAD,
HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY.)

The very question whether humanity needs Religion, constitutes a strong testimony of the fact that everywhere doubts have begun to assail men's minds regarding the necessity and use of Religion for mankind. There are persons in the world who seriously hold the view that man can do without Religion and that he can lead a useful and purposeful life without seeking guidance from any revealed code of laws, which Religion professes and claims to provide. Evidently such persons must have come to entertain this view from a vast variety of causes and it is, therefore, not quite possible to give an all-comprehensive answer that may equally convince and satisfy all those who, though united in holding this view, must have been led to it from widely different directions. I have, therefore, selected a few more prominent and important questions which have arisen in my mind during my study of this subject or which have been, on various occasions, put to me. I will endeavour to answer briefly each of these questions and towards the end of my discourse will give a general answer that will, I hope, equally apply to all these questions.

*Translated from Urdu.

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First Objection

The first point that is raised in this connection is that Religion gives rise to violent divergence of opinion, which results in the disturbance and dislocation of the public peace. My head hangs with shame and my heart is filled with grief and regret when I see that through the foolish and misguided activities of some so-called religious people much discredit and disrepute have come to Religion. I find not only the votaries of different religions breaking one another's heads but even the followers of the same religion flinging mud and dirt at one another and quarrelling and fighting between themselves. With extreme sorrow I see that human lives are sacrificed at the altar of causes too trifling to be mentioned. Human lives are taken for slaughtering cows in performance of a religious rite, and human blood is shed because of music being played before mosques. The cutting of the few branches of a *peepul* tree often results in the loss of many promising young lives. For trivial causes such as these India's peace has often been seriously disturbed. A sane, sober and intelligent person may not find it possible to detect a connection, direct or indirect, between the killing of a cow, the cutting of the few branches of a *peepul* tree, the singing of songs before a mosque and Religion, but it is a highly disconcerting fact that for these trifling reasons man has risen against man to kill him and failing that to do all sorts of harm to him.

I believe that such activities bring no credit to Religion. In the name of whatever faith they may be indulged in, they besmirch its fair name and excite the wrath of God. Those who shed innocent human blood in the name of their religion seem to labour under the misconception that in this way they do a great service to it while as a matter of fact they do it the greatest possible disservice and cause the seeds of contempt and hatred against their religion to grow and take deep root in many hearts and in this way turn them completely away from it. They are like that bear in the story who in order to frighten away a fly from the face of his master killed him by throwing a heavy stone at him. I regret that not only India but even those western countries which are considered to be highly cultured and civilized and which claim to teach

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morals and manners to other nations are also badly affected by this vicious mentality and in those countries serious fights arise from contemptibly trivial causes in which hundreds of lives are lost. So it is futile to deny that quarrels arise and fights and fracases are caused in the name of Religion, but Religion, it is to be remembered, has nothing to do with them.

Ransack the pages of the religious scriptures of any faith and you will come across no teaching which countenances these things. I have read the Vedas and other religious scriptures of the Hindus and I bear witness that Hinduism does not support the shedding of human blood in the manner in which sometimes its misguided followers shed it. Hinduism, I repeat, is wholly and completely exempt from this charge. And the Quran lends not the faintest support to the view that heads should be broken because people sing songs before Muslim mosques. The Islamic teaching is far above creating or tolerating such mentality. It is most sound and complete in all its different aspects. Christianity, too, gives no encouragement to its followers to pick a quarrel with the adherents of other religions in its name. If in some parts of the United States of America the whites sometimes indulge in the dreadful pastime of lynching and burning unfortunate negroes, the fault is not of the Christian teaching. It is that of the Americans themselves or their civilization.

So let there remain no doubt about it that no religion has ever taught its followers to be intolerant of other people's views or to fight or persecute them if they happen to disagree with them in their religious beliefs, their nationality, or race or differ from them in the pigment of their skins. On the contrary all religions insist that God is one and He is most Compassionate and Merciful and that all mankind is one and men should imbue themselves with the divine attributes of Mercy and Compassion and live peacefully and amicably among themselves. So it is the Muslims, the Hindus and the Christians who are guilty of the charge referred to above and not the Quran, the Vedas or the Bible. But I ask in all humility those persons who are accustomed to accuse Religion of intolerance and the religious people of persecuting those who do not see eye to eye with them, is not Science—which

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is their substitute for Religion—responsible for the shedding of far more human blood than Religion? Does not the charge of which they accuse Religion apply with equal force to Science which is erroneously considered to be capable of taking the place of Religion? Religion at least exhorts its followers to live peacefully with their fellow-beings, though this precept may have often been honoured more in the breach than in observance. But what has Science to give us in the place of this teaching? Is not Science responsible for the creation of the innumerable instruments of destruction that have caused havoc in the past? Are not the poisonous gases and the deadly bombs which are calculated to cause irreparable loss to human life, limb and property on a dreadfully vast scale the work of Science? If you condemn Religion on the plea that much innocent human blood has been shed in its name, then, you will have to condemn Science with much greater vehemence and vigour on the same plea as the fact is impossible of being refuted or disputed that the instruments of death and destruction invented by Science have sometimes sent to their untimely end more men in one day or even in one hour than has Religion done in hundreds of years. It has begun to be increasingly felt and admitted that Science has produced more implements and means of destruction than those that help man to improve and prolong his life. So Science is equally exposed to the charge which its votaries endeavour to lay at the door of Religion.

Second Objection

The second objection which is sometimes raised to belittle the importance of Religion or to dispense with its need or usefulness altogether is the assumption that it has always proved to be a great hindrance in the way of the growth and development of human intellect and reason. Mr. Bernard Shaw is one of the leading exponents of this seemingly plausible but really quite untenable view. To support and substantiate it, the protagonists of this theory advance the argument that all human progress in the various departments of man's life has proceeded from and is based upon the experiments and therefore upon the mistakes that man has made in the quest of knowledge. They

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contend that unless man experiments or makes mistakes he cannot acquire true knowledge. If by providing a right and infallible teaching Religion has saved man from falling into pitfalls and perils, it evidently has dispensed with the necessity for man to use his intellect and reason to discover what is right and useful for him and what is not. When you have a ready-made recipe for all that you have to do or undertake, why on earth, should you put yourself to needless mental trouble to find out what is good and what is right. This is how Religion smothers and stifles human intellect and bars and arrests the development and growth of his reason and thus prevents him from achieving that lofty stage of perfection to which he would have attained if there had been no Religion and no so-called infallible guidance such as Religion claims to provide. In this manner the leaders of the anti-Religious thought to which Mr. George Bernard Shaw belongs, think and argue.

My reply to this objection is that if there exists a religion of this type or description, which stands in the way of the growth and development of human reason and exhorts and urges its adherents to accept and follow thoughtlessly and blind-fold like dumb animals, a given system, I will be the first person to reject it. But it is inconceivable that God should Himself endow us with reason and intellect and at the same time should forbid us to make use of them. It is evidently incompatible with His all comprehensive wisdom that He should allow such a manifest and glaring inconsistency to exist in the world. But the fact is that the possession by man of the bare knowledge of an unalterable truth cannot conceivably be considered to check and impede his intellectual advance and progress. If this criterion be regarded as true, then all the inventions that Science has made so far should be rejected and all its established truths and verities spurned, on the plea that their acceptance retards and obstructs our intellectual growth. Is it not a fact that when the Scientists fathom a certain secret of nature or arrive at a new generalization they present it to the world in the form of an established fact and a proved verity ? But does it mean that on the very day the Scientists, after a strenuous, ceaseless and patient labour of many years discover such a secret of nature, the world should cry in agony that on account of that particular

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discovery the progress and growth of the reason and intellect of man will be checked and arrested. It needs no extraordinary intelligence to understand that if the discovery of a new fact or law bars the door of research and investigation in one direction it opens up endless new vistas to man's intellectual ambition in another and thus a succession of new problems arises which keep the human mind and intellect engaged and this chain of unsolved problems continues, knowing no end, bound or limit. Time was when water was considered to be an element, and then it was proved to be a compound. Did the progress of human intellect in any way suffer when water was believed to be an element or did it come to a standstill when the truth was found out that it was a compound ? Did not the disclosure of the truth that water was a compound give rise to a vast variety of problems which taxed men's minds. So it is not correct to say that the possession by man of the knowledge of an unchangeable truth in any way interferes with his intellectual and mental evolution.

In the wake of one solved problem arises a host of unsolved problems which provide abundant food for thought to students of Science and seekers after knowledge. A proved and established truth may be compared to the sun. Just as many planets revolve round the sun, similarly many unsolved problems revolve round a solved problem. They arise like so many dragon's teeth to tax men's brain when investigation and research about one problem is set at rest. Thus human brain can never remain idle. This question becomes easy of comprehension when we realize the eternal truth that Science is the work of God and Religion is His Word and there could conceivably be no conflict between God's Work and His Word as they proceed from the same source. How could it be possible then that while in the domain of Science the solution of one problem should give rise to many new problems which should help man to develop his mind and enrich his intellect, in the realm of Religion the Word of God should arrest his mental progress and that from the eternal and unalterable truths which it contains no new questions could be derived and deduced, by meditating and deliberating on which man should be able to develop his mind. The fact is that just as in Science the

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discovery of one truth or natural law leads to researches into many other allied subjects, similarly a truth presented by Religion raises many new questions which in their turn begin to demand careful study and long and patient research. I will make my meaning clear by giving a simple example. The use of wine and gambling are prohibited in Islam. It may be contended that if man had been left to himself and by making mistakes and after a long process of experimenting he would have come to the conclusion that the use of wine and gambling were injurious both to his physical and moral health, it would have been better from the point of view of the growth and development of his intellect. But a little thought given to this simple precept will reveal the many new problems which are born of it. The prohibition of wine and gambling, according to the Quran, is based on the fact that their disadvantages outweigh their advantages. Now this commandment of the Quran has placed in our hand a clear-cut law that we should not use a thing of which the harm is greater than its advantage. In our every-day life we come across many things about which the Quran contains no instruction whether they should be used or shunned. We should test each one of them by the touch-stone referred to above. We should use it if its advantages are found to be greater than its disadvantages and leave it if the case is otherwise. The precept embodying the prohibition regarding gambling and the use of intoxicating liquors reveals another important truth that these two things are not wholly devoid of all good. They have their uses also. It tells us of another useful law that the harms and benefits of somethings go together while those of certain other things seldom co-exist. The use of things whose advantages and disadvantages run together will be prohibited if their disadvantages are found to exceed their advantages. But in regard to those things whose harms and benefits do not co-exist the rule is that they may be used when their use is productive of good results, and shunned when they lead to bad results. A person suffering from dysentery would be advised not to take wheat-bread despite its numerous advantages because its use is calculated to cause swelling and irritation in his intestines.

So we see that this simple and brief injunction of the Quran

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regarding wine and gambling contains a store of knowledge which can be of immense use to us in solving many problems which confront us in our daily life. This injunction is erroneously considered to check and impede the growth and development of human mind and brain while as a matter of fact by revealing an unalterable truth contained in it God has saddled human intellect with the responsibility of investigating into hundreds of other things and finding out which of them are useful for him and making full use of them. Thus has God, through His infinite Wisdom, opened up endless avenues for man's intellectual progress and by unravelling one mystery has provided us with keys to the solution of many others.

So this objection does not apply to Religion and hence Religion as such cannot be given up on the score of this objection, though a particular form of it may be rejected on account of some defects from which it may be suffering. Just as a person would not altogether give up human society because he happens to have some differences or disagreements with one or a few persons, similarly the rejection of Religion as such could hardly be justified merely because the teachings of a particular religious system fail to come up to that high standard of perfection which a religion claiming to be humanity's infallible guide should possess.

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THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

> " In order to strengthen her ultimate authority in Palestine Great Britain is creating, in this of all the Arabian countries, a so-called ' Jewish National Home.' Just as in Ireland, she created a stronghold for herself in Protestant Ulster, so in the vast world of the Arabs Britain tries to make a Zionist Ulster of Palestine ".

This paragraph taken from an article entitled " Causes of Unrest in Palestine " published in our last issue, describes in a nutshell the whole position of Great Britain in Palestine and her firm resolve to thwart and crush the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs. The year 1915 was a critical year for Great Britain and her Allies in the late Great War. German armies were carrying everything before them on all fronts. The fate of the British Empire and that of her Allies hung in the balance. It was then that the Arabs were promised complete freedom from all foreign control if they rebelled against the Turks. That promise was conveyed to Sherif Hussain by Sir Henry MacMahon, then British Resident at Cairo, in a letter which on October 24, 1915, he, on the orders of the British Government, wrote to Sherif Hussain. The Arabs kept their promise and raised the standard of revolt against their own co-religionists, the Turks. The Christian British Government treated that solemn promise as a mere scrap of paper and in 1917 when Russia having gone out of the War the Allies were on the verge of sustaining a crushing defeat, they (the British Government) in order to enlist the powerful help of the Jews all over the world promised to them a " national home " in Palestine consigning to oblivion the patent fact that it was already the national home of another people to whom they were bound by a similar undertaking. The Christian nations of the West have never felt the least compunction or hesitancy in breaking most solemn pledges and treaties when political expediency has demanded it. The following paragraphs from a speech of Mr. Lloyd George delivered in the House of Commons on June last throw some light on the " compelling

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circumstances" which led the British Government practically to hand over Palestine to the Jews. He said :

> "At the time the French army had mutinied, the Italian army was on the verge of collapse and America had hardly started preparing in earnest. There was nothing left but Britain confronting the most powerful military combination the world has ever seen. It was important for us to seek every legitimate help we could get. We came to the conclusion, from information received from every part of the world, that it was vital we should have the sympathies of the Jewish community. In these circumstances and on the advice which we received we decided it was desirable to secure the sympathy and co-operation of that most remarkable community, the Jews throughout the world. They were helpful in America and in Russia which at that moment was just walking out and leading us alone."

Mr. L. George continued :

> "In these conditions we proposed this (Balfour Declaration) to our Allies. France accepted it, Italy accepted it, and the United States accepted it, all the other Allies accepted it, and all the nations which constituted the League of Nations accepted it. And the Jews — I am here to bear testimony to the fact — with all the influence they possess responded nobly to the appeal which was made. I do not know whether the House realize how much we owe to Dr. Weizmann with his marvellous scientific brain. He absolutely saved the British army at a critical moment when a particular ingredient which was essential we should have for our great guns was completely exhausted. His great chemical genius enabled us to solve that problem. But he is only one out of many who rendered great services to the Allies. It is an obligation of honour which we undertook, to which the Jews responded. We cannot get out of it without dishonour." (as if to break promise with the Arabs is no dishonour.—*Ed*).

Mr. L. George's speech explains the causes that led the British Government to barter away Palestine to the Jews, and the following paragraphs from Mr. Amery's speech made in the House of Commons on March 24 last, show that the British people would continue their friendship with the Jews even if it cost them the friendship of the Muslim world. Mr. Amery said :

> "In these days when defence problems are uppermost in our minds, we cannot forget the immense importance of

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> Palestine as the effective air centre of the British imperial system, not only from the point of view of protecting the Suez Canal and guarding the Eastern Mediterranean, but from the point of view of our communications with India and the East Palestine offers the very outlet to the Mediterranean for oil supplies under British control. Who knows whether we shall have access to American supplies in future? The importance of Haifa, both as an oil base and as a general Naval base, more secure than Malta would be in certain circumstances, is very great . . . . . If we had in Palestine a prospering and developing community (meaning the Jews), bound to this country by ties of gratitude, influenced by the fact that we have made an ancient dream (*i.e.*, a National Home) come true, the effect would surely be well worth keeping in mind."

After these introductory remarks we describe below the history of the Zionist Movement which is mainly responsible for the present unrest in Palestine and also the vicissitudes of fortune through which Palestine has passed during the ages. We are thankful to Mr. V. Shean's article in *Asia* from which we have drawn material for our article.

A tenacious race

The Jews are a terribly stubborn and tenacious race. Once they come to entertain any idea, however foolish and unreasonable it may be, they stick to it, shutting their eyes to everything that may happen to indicate and demonstrate the falsity and hollowness of that idea. And once they incorporate the doing of a certain thing, the observance of a particular ritual among their religious practices, no amount of logic or reasoning can wean them from their set course. Long before Jesus Christ was born in Judea, Jerusalem the sacred city of the Jews was destroyed by a Persian monarch and with it was laid into ruins Solomon's Temple, the Jewish Ka'aba. The advent of a Messiah was promised to the sons of Isarael to restore to them their lost greatness and their pristine glory and grandeur. That Messiah came in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. But the Jews would have nothing to do with him, partly because instead of giving them glory and greatness, he exhorted them to look for these things in heaven rather than on earth and partly because they had not seen with their physical eyes

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Prophet Elijah actually descend from the heaven. The Messiah came and went the way of all flesh. *That Prophet*, the last hope of mankind also appeared and after living a brief though very strenuous and successful life was gathered to his Celestial Companions on high. The Messiah appeared second time, in the person of an Indian *Avatar* in the 'land of the five rivers' and died 28 years ago, but the Jews are still impatiently waiting for the descent from the heaven of Prophet Elijah who would be succeeded by their Saviour, their Liberator and Emancipator, their much-expected Messiah whom in their foolishness and bigotry they hung on the Cross 2,000 years ago.

Jewish Dream

Such are the people who are dreaming of the establishment of a national home in Palestine. They are not only a self-conscious but a self-expressive and self-assertive people. Between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Balfour Declaration many generations of Jews have lived and died in countries ruled by other races. Throughout that time they have never ceased to regard Palestine as the historic home of their spirit, or to explain to themselves and others that this was the position. The survival of the Jewish genius after two thousand years of deracination was due, not only to external pressure on a united folk, but to the persistence of the belief that Palestine was to be the centre of their cultural consciousness. In spite of the many terrible convulsions which shook this community to its very foundations and endangered its very existence, in spite of the ceaseless political persecution to which the Jews have been subjected throughout the ages, and in spite of their continued slavery, which kills in a people long subjected to domination the will to assert themselves, at no time did the respect for Hebrew learning, or the idea that such learning could best be disseminated in Palestinian air, die out among the scattered Jews. And in the nineteenth century, co-eval with the growth of what was called the "Jewish Problem," and the kindling of various hopes for its solution, there grew a belief among the Jews of Eastern Europe that a revival of Hebrew culture in Palestine was now possible.

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Political Zionism

At first these hopes were not connected; nor are they yet, in spite of much manipulation, perfectly blended. Those who were chiefly concerned with solving what they called the "Jewish Problem" gathered under the Viennese journalist Theodore Herzl and founded (in 1897) political Zionism. The motive power for political Zionism came from without, from the intolerable anti-Semitism of continental Europe. Its object, as proclaimed by its founder, was the "ingathering of the exiles." Herzl wished to take the persecuted millions from Russia, Austria and Germany and settle them in Palestine. He seemed to have no idea, so it appears from his letters, diaries and speeches, either of the area or of the population of the land of his dreams. His idea was adopted with enthusiasm by thousands of Jews in East and West alike, and the Zionist Organization was formed to carry it out.

Spiritual Zionism

But those who cared less about the "Jewish Problem" and more about the Jews were distrustful of Zionism. In particular those who had hoped to revive, gradually and naturally, a Hebrew culture in Palestine, tended to form a group apart. Their views were expressed for many years by Achad Ha'am (Asher Ginzberg), the greatest Hebrew writer of the period and an intelligent and admonitory critic of the baroque elements in Zionist nationalism. Achad Ha'am's party, in and out of the Zionist Organization, hoped for a "fixed national spiritual centre of Judaism" and came to be known as "spiritual Zionists." After the Balfour Declaration in 1917, these two things became one, and the immortal phrase, "a National Home for the Jews in Palestine," made its appearance.

Since this Declaration a kind of Hebrew revival has taken place. The Hebrew language is spoken, written and taught in Palestine. Hebrew presses, even Hebrew theatres, exist. An impetus has been given to the further development of Hebrew literature. Political Zionism under the Balfour Declaration has assumed the task of encouraging all these forms of national

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cultural revival and has spent large sums of money every year on them. A Hebrew-speaking generation is growing up in Palestine under *Zionist* auspices, and it is by no means impossible that all these energies will in no time produce a small but homogeneous modern Hebrew nation inside the Arab province of Palestine.

A Modern Hebrew nation

But such a nation, if it comes into being, must depend for its life on the presence of British or other strong foreign protection. It can neither support nor protect itself. This country is already inhabited by a growing population which has no intention of getting out. The early *Zionists* were dimly aware of the existence of a population in the country, but considered that the " wild men of the desert " could be bought out or sold out or driven out, like the Red Indians of North America. The Arabs are not Red Indians (although many *Zionists* persist in so regarding them), and they are not only overwhelmingly strong in numbers but strong in the possession of a racial and cultural tradition which is in no respect inferior to that of the Jews. These inhabitants are often willing to sell their land to the new-comer, as they were in the days before the Balfour Declaration, but they do not consider that the purchase of land by the foreigners gives them any right to political domination. The *Zionists* are thus trying to create, under British protection, a modern Hebrew nation in an alien country. Their struggle to accomplish their aim may be regarded as heroic. But like all heroic struggles it has set up an extraordinary tension in the air and has inflamed the nationalism of the strugglers to an extreme degree. This is why we are frequently treated in Palestine to exhibitions of what can only be called " Jewish Fascism, " an intense, deliberate, though quite unjust and unfounded assertion of the new-comers' claim to rule. Sometimes this Fascism takes such insolent and provocative forms that the inhabitants of the country become naturally exasperated and disturbances follow. Such crises are not infrequent in Palestine and there is abundant evidence for the belief that they will be more frequent in the future.

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Mischievous Balfour Declaration

But it may be said that the Jews and the Arabs can co-operate, can live side by side peacefully and amicably: There was no trouble between them in the days before the Balfour Declaration was made. *This is true there was no trouble between them in the days before Zionism acquired political powers and a privileged position.* The trouble which began soon after the British divulged the Balfour Declaration to the startled people of Palestine, and which it was (consciously or unconsciously) the historical function of the Balfour Declaration to create, has never ceased since. On many points there has been uninterrupted struggle between the Jews and Arabs for many years. *There has never been a serious effort on the part of the Zionist Organization to understand, conciliate, or co-operate with the Arabs.* There has never been a moment when the British Government of the country has not had as its chief task the arrangement of difficulties between Zionists and Arabs or the maintenance of the public order menaced by these disputes. *In reason and in common-sense it is clear that this must be so, since a national home for one race cannot easily or naturally be established in a country which is already the national home of another.* The combined testimony of experience, reason and common-sense shows us that permanent conciliation between the Zionists and the Arabs, is not possible. Until some concrete evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, we must continue to believe it impossible.

British Government responsible

The British Government clearly is responsible for all the Arab-Jew disturbances, all the bloodshed and misery that these disturbances involve. These two peoples lived together like friends and brothers before the mischievous Balfour Declaration was made. It sought to give the Jews a political position in Palestine which in their wildest dreams they never hoped to get. It sought to deprive the Arabs of their homes and hearths. It sought to create "a National Home for the Jews," in a country which was to all intents and purposes, an Arabic country, Arabic in tradition, in culture, in civilization, in customs, manners, etiquette, inhabited by an overwhelmingly

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predominant Arab population. Palestine is as much Arabic, if not more, as England is English. Then why should the British Government seek to create a "National Home for the Jews" in such a country, passes our comprehension, if at all the intention was not *divide et rule.* The sinister responsibility of what has already happened in Palestine and what is likely to happen again and again unless the Jews are plainly told that there is no room for the creation of a National Home for them in Palestine, lies upon the British Government. This is how this benign Government always requites the help offered them in time of need. The British are always as ready to break their plighted word as they give it. The Arabs must have, to their great sorrow and humiliation, realised this painful fact. Will the British undo the mischief the Balfour Declaration has done in Palestine?

The Masjid-i-Aqsa

Just as the shadow of the kremlin lies across all Moscow and the marble ghost of the Acropolis is never out of mind in Athens, so the Haram-es-Sharif is the central physical fact and spiritual dominant of Jerusalem. To the majority of the people of Palestine, the Muslims and the Jews, it is the holiest place in the Holy Land; to Muslims in general it is a capital only less sacred than Mecca and Medina; and to the artist or student it is a treasure unique in the world.

The Harem has bathed in blood through all the centuries we know anything about. Even to-day there are hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of Arabs who would be willing to die for it, just as there are hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of Jews who regard it as a part of their ancient heritage. Just now this view is disclaimed by Zionist leaders, but political expediency cannot eradicate from Jewish hearts the hope that the temple of Solomon would one day be rebuilt on Mount Moriah. The whole literature of this race attests the persistence of that aspiration. If or when, indeed, the Jewish majority is attained in Palestine—the majority which the Zionist leaders frankly state to be the claim of their policy*—then

*We take the view that we cannot put ourselves in a minority in a National Home. A minority status of the Jewish people is neither novel nor singular. It has lasted for centuries and it is world-wide. But if National Home is to have a real meaning we cannot of our own volition and free will accept a minority status—Lord Melchett in the House of Lords.

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might the great shrine of Islam pass naturally into the hands of those whose ancestors possessed it two thousand five hundred years ago.

Importance of Palestine

The significance of Jerusalem to both the Muslims and the Jews has its origin in feeling for the Haram-es-Sharif. But for Haram, which Jewish imagination has for centuries transformed into a fantom temple, there would be no Zionism; for the Temple is the heart of Jewish aspiration and the only important reason why Palestine was chosen as the Jewish National Home. If this age-long cult of the Temple had not so grown and absorbed the religious genius of the Jewish people through centuries of persecution, they might years ago have chosen another, a richer and less densely populated, country and built their new nation with comparative ease. But this was never possible in the past, Jewish authorities say, and there is no reason to believe that it will ever be possible in the future : the Zionist aspiration is for Palestine, the Jewish aspiration is for the Temple in which the genius of the race developed. No other land, however, hospitable or promising, can take its place.

But this sacred enclosure, which makes Palestine so desirable for the Jews, also makes it imperative for the Arabs to hold the country. Aside from nationalism pure and simple —a movement which has its ups and downs, lies dormant for a time and revives under stress—the one great permanent reason why the Arabs can never surrender Palestine is, it can easily be imagined, the Haram-es-Sharif. This place was the first *Qibla* of Islam. Towards this place the Holy Prophet prayed in the first few years of his mission; here was he translated in his vision from Mecca in a single night and spiritually ascended into Heaven, so a large party of Islam believes, to witness the Glory and Majesty of God and to be initiated into the unknown Divine Secrets. The whole Muslim world regards this place as a vital centre of the Islamic faith. In some periods of history— under the Omayyads, for example —the pilgrimage to Jerusalem almost supplanted the pilgrimage to Mecca for a large part of the Arab empire. From Sinai to Kurdistan, and from Alexandretta to Aden, the awakening

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Arab world looks to the Holy City with devotion ; and, now that all the Arab peoples have become conscious of the danger of losing it, alarm has given new intensity to their feeling. Just as it can be said that there would have been no Zionist movement without the cult of the Temple, so it can be stated that the existence of that Temple in its Muslim form (the Haram-es-Sharif) insures the failure of that movement. To any disinterested observer who has witnessed the outburst of rage which has recently taken place in Palestine, it must have served as rash and dangerous to attempt to colonize in that country as it would be in Mecca itself.

The Haram, an enclosure of about 145,000 square meters, or some thirty-six acres, bearing on its stone platform two of the noblest movements of all architecture, is to-day very much as it was left by the Omayyad Caliphs in the eighth and ninth centuries. There have been embellishments (the most important of which were made by Suleman, the Magnificent in the 16th century) and numerous restorations, but the sacred platform itself and its main structures, the Dome of the Rock and the mosque of EL-AQSA, have remained substantially the same for eleven hundred years. For the pre-Islamic history of the site we are obliged to rely on rather scanty literary references, since archæological material does not exist.

History of the Temple

It is possible, however, to trace the story of the sanctuary from these literary records, chiefly Biblical and Talmudic. The first Jewish invasion of Jerusalem took place under King David (about 1000 B. C.) at the head of the Israelite tribes which had been slowly settling in the country during the preceding three centuries. David built an altar which is believed to have been on the great rock of Mount Moriah—the rock, which, according to later Palestinian tradition, Jewish, Christian and Muslim alike, was the place of Abraham's sacrifice. If the Talmudic legend of this sacrifice may be assumed to have existed in David's day (and these legends are more tenacious in Palestine than in most countries), it probably dictated the choice of the Kings' altar site. Solomon, the first King's son and successor, built on Mount Moriah his palace and Temple, a wonder of antiquity, of which nothing now remains.

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Capture by the Babylonians

During the reigns of David and Solomon the Jews were, for the only time in their history, a united and independent people and held all Palestine up to Damascus under their possession. But on Solomon's death the kingdom was divided; inter-tribal wars and the conquest by the Babylonians followed, and in 586 B. C. the Temple of Solomon was destroyed and the Jews taken into captivity. When at last a section of the Jews of Babylon were sent back to Jerusalem by Cyrus the Great, one of their chief enterprises was the building of the Second Temple (520—515 B. C.) in the hallowed site of the first. The Second Temple was, it appears, far less splendid than the first, for the tribes were impoverished by war and exile. It served its purpose, however, as the centre for the national life both religious and peculiar during the five troubled centuries which followed. It was at the Second Temple, thanks to the sagacity of Ezra and Nehemiah, that Jewish religion began to develop the complexity and rigidity of law, the exclusiveness and austerity of spirit, which have since characterised it.

One of the primary political problems in this part of the world was in those days, as is still, the conversion of nomads into a sedentary population. It is incontestable that the chief instrument in this all-important process for the Jews was the Temple, which centralized and dignified their tribal religion and gave it the strength to survive secular disaster. At the great conquest of Syria in 332 B. C. the Jews were already a sedentary and civilized people with an eleborate system of theocratic law and an accomplished priesthood (dating from Ezra and Nehemiah) and a growing religious literature. The first Greek rulers of the country (the five Ptolemies who reigned from 300 to 200 B. C.) were benevolent to the Jewish community and allowed the temple regime undisturbed; but the conquest by the Seleucids of Syria (Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV) was followed by pillage and desecration of the sacred area. Antiochus IV even attempted to introduce Greek instead of Hebrew as the language of Jewish worship and finally made an open effort to substitute the Greek for the Jewish religion. Although Palestine was by

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this time thoroughly Hellenized and Hebrew was no longer spoken even among the Jews, those of the ancient tribes who had remained in the country rose in revolt at this, and Judas Maccabeus conquered Jerusalem. Thereafter the Temple worship was undisturbed until Pompey's conquest (63 B. C.) and the downfall of the Maccabees.

Temple of Herod

Herod the Great, an Idumean adventurer, seized the throne of Judea in 37 B. C. and decided to conciliate his Jewish subjects by building for them a new and more splendid Temple, with vast expenditure of gold, of marble and of precious woods. It is of this, the Temple of Herod, that we possess detailed descriptions by Flavius Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities* and *The Wars of the Jews*. From this Temple also the pre-Islamic parts of the Haram (the great substructures of the southern end of the platform, probably, as well as the lower masonry of the Western and Southern walls) have survived.

The Temple of Herod apparently occupied exactly the same space as the present-day Haram. The outer courtyard was known as the Court of the Gentiles and was Jerusalem's Rialto. Inside this was the series of inner courts reserved for Israelites in progressive order—the ordinary courtyard into which any Israelite could go, the Court of the Priests and the Holy of Holies. In these inner fastnesses Hebrew still existed at this time as the language of worship, although the Jews spoke either Aramaic or Greek in ordinary life.

Herod's Temple was never completed as planned. Begun in 20 B. C. and in use for nearly a century, it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A. D., when Titus Vespasianus—after a long and terrible siege—captured Jerusalem. The Jews dispersed themselves more thoroughly than ever after this, and Palestine, like the rest of Syria, merged completely in the Greco-Roman world. The Emperor Hadrian, indeed, carried the process so far as to build a Temple of Jupiter on the sacred hill where the sanctuary of the Jews had stood. Some remnants of the Roman Temple show that this, too, was a building of real magnificence.

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The Muslim conquest

The Muslim conquered Palestine from the Romans in 637 A. D., and when the Head of Muslim State, the great Omar, second successor of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) entered Jerusalem in the same year he found the Haram deserted and filled with rubbish, much of which was deliberately strewn there by the Christians to show their contempt for the Jews. Omar reconstructed the platform and built over the Rock Mosque which endured for some forty years, although nothing is known to exist of it to-day. It is because of this edifice of his that the Dome of the Rock has so often been called the Mosque of Omar through the succeeding centuries.

It was the Omayyad Caliphs who gave us the Haram as it exists to-day. The Omayyad dynasty, to which both Jerusalem and Damascus owe so much, did not control the Arabian peninsula. Hence it became politically advisable for these Caliphs to emphasize the sacred character of Jerusalem. Abdul Malik ibn-i-Merwan built the Haram which has stood ever since. Much money was spent in beautifying and decorating it. The resources of the empire were poured out upon the sacred hill, architects and artists in mosaic, in stained glass and in tile were gathered to make the masterpiece. From its reconstructions by Abdul Malik ibn-i-Merwan to the present time it has gone through many vicissitudes. It was captured and occupied by Christian crusaders under Godfrey de Bouillon in 1099, recaptured by Muslims under the famous Sultan Salah-ud-Din in 1178 and finally captured from the Turks by Field-Marshal Lord Allenby in 1917. But in spite of the vicissitudes it has gone through and the changes it has seen the essential beauty and significance of the place have not altered with the centuries, and we can regard it to-day as being in every important respect as it was when it was first built by Prophet David in 100 B. C.

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THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION

(By mr. Abdur-Raheem Malabari, B. A., B. L.)

It is commonly thought that the practice of circumcision is confined only to Muslims and Jews. But this is not so. It is prevalent among many communities and in different parts of the world. Recent researches have disclosed the fact that circumcision is practised, besides Jews and Muslims, by certain sections of the Christian world like the Copts and the Christian Abyssinians and also by people in Central Australia and America (*vide Encyclopædia Britannica*).

As regards the time and place of the origin of this custom nothing can be said definitely. We can, however, be almost sure that it was an established institution among men in the earliest stage of civilization. There is reason to suppose that circumcision was practised thousands of years ago by people who constituted what the historians call the Neolithic human communities and who had later on developed in the Mediterranean and western Asiatic area a type of culture known by the name of the Heliolithic culture. Circumcision is, in all probability, a vestige of that culture if not of a still earlier civilization. Wherever the people with the Heliolithic culture went they might have taken with them, along with other practices, the rite of circumcision also. This culture seems to have spread age by age eastward and from island to island across the Pacific till it may have reached America by the land route now disconnected by Behring Strait. The fact that circumcision is in practice in that continent adds weight to this view. According to the Bible flint stones were used in this surgical operation (Exodus iv. 25). This also indicates its remote origin.

Circumcision among the Jews

The beginning of the rite of circumcision among the Jews is placed in Genesis xvii in the time of Abraham where that

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patriarch is shown to have entered into a covenant with the Lord, the covenant being that Abraham and all the male members of his tribe after him should get themselves circumcised. This may be the correct date of the origin of circumcision so far as the Jews are concerned. But it is not the Jews only who practised it. It was practised by all the Semitic races with the probable exceptions of the Assyrians and Babylonians (*vide Encyclopædia Britannica*). So we cannot be sure when it was started among the other branches of the Semitic race like the Arameans and Phœnicians.

Whatever may be the exact date of its origin it was believed for a long time that circumcision originated in Egypt. But this is no longer considered to be the correct view. It is quite true that it was practised in that country in very ancient times and as some authorities have supposed, the peoples of north Africa and Asia might have adopted it from the Egyptians. But it appears in so many distant parts of the world that as the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* correctly points out, " it must, at any rate, in these cases have originated independently, unless, of course, we assign the origin to the earliest period of civilization and intellectual consciousness."

Circumcision among early Christians

Although the Christians of to-day do not, as a rule, practise circumcision, Christ and his disciples, all of them had subjected themselves to this surgical operation. St. Paul, the founder of modern Christianity, who differed from his Master, among many other things on the question of circumcision, had also been circumcised (Philippians: iii. 5). As a matter of fact every Christian is by law bound to observe this rite, for it is said, " And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised " (Leviticus: xii. 3). Christ has nowhere abrogated this law. He could not do it even if he so wished. " Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets" says he, " I am not come to destroy but to fulfil " (Matthew: v. 17).

The idea that Christians need not undergo circumcision was later on introduced into Christianity by Paul as a sort of concession to converts from the non-Israelites. This is

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clear from the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles. Paul especially was actuated by an intense enthusiasm to spread Christianity beyond the boundaries it was intended to be preached by its founder who claimed to have been sent "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew : xv. 24). In order to see Christianity spread Paul had to adopt a policy of reconciliation in some matters and of absolute non-intervention in certain others. He was a religious enthusiast, but his enthusiasm was tempered with a high degree of political foresight. He feared that too much insistence on circumcision would considerably check the growth of the infant faith by exciting the contempt along with the hostility of the gentile nations. He, therefore, mitigated its rigour with platitudes and gradually effected its complete abolition. "Behold," says he in one place, "I Paul say unto you that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Galatians : v. 2-3). In this epistle to the Romans he is less guarded. "If therefore the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law" asks he, "shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ?" (Romans : ii. 26). No one can find fault with the logic of these arguments except that it was opposed to the Jewish law and traditions and that it has had the effect of depriving the followers of Christ of a very useful institution.

Different Views about Circumcision

Like the time and place of the origin of circumcision, its significance has also been a subject of much speculation and dispute. Some consider that it was a tribal badge in primitive communities. In that case it will be considered to have existed from the time when men went about naked. Some regard it as a substitute for some serious sacrificial ceremony. Sir R. Burton was of opinion that it was introduced to promote fertility. According to another authority "it was originally a preliminary to marriage and so a ceremony of introduction to the full prerogative of manhood." If the latter is the correct view, then the transference of this rite to infancy among the Jews must have, been, as has been pointed out, a later change. The Biblical expression "bloody husband" or "bridegroom of blood" for one

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who is circumcised is, one may say, reminiscient of this connubial aspect of circumcision.

Circumcision among Muslims

The Muslims, perhaps do not attach to it so much sanctity as do the Jews. Yet its importance for them is, none the less, very considerable. Its observance by Muslims is laid down by the authority of the Holy Prophet. To this extent it has a religious sanctity for them. According to Islam the physical and spiritual life of man are so closely bound up together that the one cannot be detached from the other. His being is a compact whole which, from a truly philosophic point of view, admits of no distinct divisions. Every physical act, Islam says, has its corresponding effect upon the soul and *vice versa*. From this distant Islamic stand-point, some spiritual benefit may be claimed to accrue from circumcision also. I do not deny that. As for Muslims, it has a spiritual significance inasmuch as it is done in obedience to an injunction of the Prophet of Allah.

Whatever the spiritual value of circumcision may be, the immediate grounds on which the Holy Prophet prescribed it seem to be mainly physical. A failure to understand these grounds and the benefits humanity stands to gain by circumcision has led those for whom the vilification of Islam is a sacred duty to ridicule it on this score also. Circumcision has been criticised as unnatural and its recognition by the Holy Prophet as a blind adherence to an old custom of pagan Arabia. I do not think this criticism deserves any serious consideration. It is, of course, true that circumcision was in vogue in Arabia before the birth of the Prophet. He did not originate it nor did he claim that Islam was a new religion in every aspect. But to say that the Holy Prophet lent his support to this practice only because it had already become firmly established in Arabia is to betray utter ignorance of the aggressive and revolutionary attitude he took in other matters that were much dearer to the Arabian mind.

The fact that the Holy Prophet was led to prescribe circumcision only as a useful and healthy practice that Muslims

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should follow is quite clear from the way in which he has laid it down. Circumcision is not the only thing he has mentioned. Removing hair from the arm-pit and the lower navel area, clipping the nails short, and cleaning the teeth, etc., are also mentioned along with circumcision as things that Muslims should do. Now this makes it clear that he advocated circumcision as an essential condition of healthy living. It also clearly indicates the place circumcision is given in the code of Islam. Islam never meant it to be an indispensable preliminary to spiritual purification and to the admission of the proselytes. If an exaggerated importance has come to be attached to it by certain sections of Muslims—and in southern India such is really the case—it only speaks of their short-sightedness and want of spiritual sense. Circumcision is perhaps no more and no less important than, say, the daily cleaning of the teeth. The one is safeguard against venereal diseases, the other against offensive smell and dental decay. Both are equally important for a perfect Muslim, but neither is indispensable for being a Muslim.

Advantages of Circumcision

The fact that circumcision is really conducive to health can hardly be denied. Consult any doctor and he will enumerate its advantages. Persons who are circumcised have been found to be less susceptible to the attack of sexual diseases and even if they are attacked they have better chances of cure. In the case of persons who are not circumcised, however, the loose integument covering the end of genitals is a constant obstruction to the free passage of urine and seminal fluid. Every time these are passed some drops are retained inside the integumental folds. This urinary moist together with the dirt that always gathers inside those folds makes them a hotbed of germs and a source of constant irritation which in the case of young children in particular leads to premature sexual consciousness and evil habits. I do not want to dwell here on this medical and anatomical aspect of circumcision. I leave it to the knowledge and imagination of my readers. With the progress of medical science, however, there has been a greater recognition of the hygienic value of circumcision. "In recent years" says the *Encyclopædia Britannica* "the medical

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profession has been responsible for its considerable extension among other than Jewish children, the operation being recommended not merely in cases of malformation but generally for reasons of health."

Some objections answered

It is very commonly objected that circumcision constitutes an interference with the natural state of man and with the divine scheme of things. And it is on this ground it is considered better to avoid it. I would like to say here a few words regarding this aspect of the question. It is, however, not a little surprising that this objection is often put forward by those whose own shaven chins and clipped nails give the direct lie to it. Removing hair from any part of the body or cutting the nail is as much an interference with the natural state of man as is the act of circumcision. If what is meant by being in a natural state is to allow one's self to be covered up by these biological growths, perhaps the African and Australian aborigines and the Indian sadhus alone could claim to be natural and unsophisticated. If the word 'natural' is understood only to denote the rude state in which things happen and exist unassisted by human intelligence, who can deny that a barbaric primitive state is more natural? Even nudism can be and has actually been justified on such grounds. But it is a mistake to think that the rudimentary state of anything is its permanent natural state. The naturalness or otherwise of anything has reference to its usefulness to man and the former is to be measured in terms of the latter. Nature is not a workshop where human bodies are manufactured in such a form as to leave no room for further improvement. Just take a small child and see how much external care and help it requires. As soon as it is born its navel-string has to be cut off. This is an act of human interference in the natural state of the child and yet nobody seems to take an objection to it. The life of the child starts with this interference and it continues to be interfered with at every stage of its development. It lives and grows in an atmosphere which, in this sense, maybe called purely artificial and unnatural. And yet it is exactly this artificial state which contributes to man's moral and intellectual superiority. In considering any

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circumstances the question always would be how far it is likely to help or retard his onward march. If it helps him in any degree it would be natural for him to that extent, however, unnatural it might otherwise appear. This, I think, is the correct way of looking at this question. Looked at from this sane point of view, circumcision cannot be criticised as unnatural. It is quite natural because it benefits man.

I cannot, however, close this article without adding a word of grateful acknowledgment. In writing it I have been guided by a very scholarly article on the same subject written in Malayalam by my brother Moulvi Abdullah Sahib Malabari, H.A., Ahmadiyya missionary for Malabar and Ceylon. I render him my respectful thanks.

Thy Lord hath decreed
That ye worship none but Him,
And that ye be kind
To parents. Whether one
Or both of them attain
Old age in thy life,
Say not them a word
Of contempt, nor repel them,
But address them
In terms of honour.

And, out of kindness,
Lower to them the wing
Of humility, and say :
"My Lord ! bestow on them
Thy Mercy even as they
Cherished me in childhood."

Your Lord knoweth best
What is in your hearts :
If ye do deeds of righteounsness,
Verily He is Most Forgiving
To those who turn to him
Again and again
(in true penitence).

(From English Translation of the Holy Quran by Mr. Abdulla Yusuf Ali).

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ISLAM AND FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD

(By Mr. Manzur Murshed, B.A., B.T.)

In a recent issue of the *Eastern Times* there has appeared an interesting article from the pen of Mr. Hakim Abdur Rashid Nawab Mekki under the above caption. The writer in the course of his article has made certain veiled insinuations against the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and has sought to show that the denial of the finality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad tantamounts to the denial of his prophethood. I am not going to discuss here the claim of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Sahib but I am bound to say that my study of the Holy Quran has fully convinced me that there is absolutely no foundation for this old, hackneyed and exploded theory, and in the interest of Islam I appeal and beseech the Muslims to discard this ludicrous dogma. The aim of the present article is not so much to support the claim of Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian as to examine the pros and cons of the arguments of the learned writer.

Let me analyse the main points in his article. They are :—

(*i*) Belief in the finality of prophethood is a cardinal principle of the Islamic faith and as such its deniers automatically cease to remain Muslims. (*ii*) To believe in the possibility of the advent of a new prophet after the Holy Prophet constitutes an insult to his mission and personality because his dispensation thus becomes abrogated or cancelled. (*iii*) It is said that no true and genuine prophet can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad but false prophets will continue to come. (*v*) All the theologians of bygone days were unanimous on the point that no new prophet could come after the Holy Prophet and only "religious adventurers" or false claimants to prophethood would occasionally arise to damage and disturb the solidity and cohesion of the Muslims.

Before I try to refute these arguments of Mr. Mekki it is necessary to make our position clear at the outset. It will be

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useful to point out that the Ahmadis like orthodox Muslims maintain that no prophet with an independent message or teaching will or can appear after the Holy Prophet of Arabia and those that will appear will only be follower-prophets after the manner of Aaron, Solomon and Jesus, who brought no new law but merely expounded or re-interpreted the message of their master-preceptor, the law-giving Prophet, Moses. They may be compared to the moon in the firmament in relation to the sun who were the law-giving Prophets. In the same way the Ahmadis believe that Mirza Sahib, too, only reinterpreted or revived the teaching of the Holy Prophet, who was the final law-giving Messenger of God and as such he was the spiritual father of Mirza Sahib or for that matter of any other prophet who may appear in future.

Having thus made the Ahmadiyya position clear let me examine the arguments advanced by Mr. Mekki. The first question is that the doctrine of 'finality' is a cardinal principle of Islam and as such an uncompromising belief in this doctrine is binding upon every son of Islam. But this is merely a claim unsupported by any solid argument. I challenge Mr. Mekki to quote even a single verse from the Holy Quran or an authentic tradition of the Holy Prophet in support of his contention. As is well-known the article of faith of the Muslims is "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His apostle," or in other words, "I bear witness that there is but one God and Muhammad is His Messenger," and not what our learned writer, Mr. Mekki, would have us believe, *i.e.*, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His *last Prophet*," and again "I bear witness that there is but one God and Muhammad is His *last Prophet*"!! To say so would be an innovation and I ask all believers in the finality of prophethood to say whether such innovation is permissible in Islam. Again we read in the second chapter of the Holy Quran: "The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and so do the believers. They all believe in God and His angels, His Books and His Messengers. We make no distinction between any one of His apostles." This verse of the Quran alone is sufficient to silence all our

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opponents and to bring home to them the fact as to what constitutes the article of faith of a Muslim. It, therefore, follows as a corollary that the deniers in the finality of prophethood cannot as understood by orthodox Muslims, cease to remain Muslims as do the deniers of the apostleship of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

In the second place I have already pointed out that as every new prophet, according to the Ahmadiyya point of view, will invariably be a Muslim and will be bound to consider it as a matter of pride and glory to be the servant of the Master-Prophet Muhammad, his advent can in no manner mean the repudiation of the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad; rather it will enhance his glory and spiritual eminence. Muslims can well take pride in the fact that the spiritual greatness of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) was such that he not only could produce saints among his followers, but he was the spiritual *father* of many a prophet who attained to this very high spiritual position by closely following him. Again is it not a matter of disgrace for the Muslims that so many follower-prophets, in the capacity of expounders and interpreters of the law, should have appeared among the Israelites for the rejuvination and re-orientation of the Mosaic teaching but not a single person from among the followers of the Holy Prophet should attain that high spiritual rank. I ask the orthodox theologians in all humility whether according to their belief the lot of the Prophet of Arabia remains at all enviable.

Let me examine the third objection of Mr. Mekki. He remarks that belief in the continuation of prophethood will cause a split in the body-politic of Islam, and rend it into many rival camps. I admit the force and weight of this argument and thank him for his solicitude for the solidarity of Islam. But there is one question which requires to be answered. Do the prophets, whether major or minor, dependent or independent are sent by God to unite the children of Allah or to split them into "rival camps"? Did Jacob, David, Moses, Solomon or Jesus or the Holy Prophet Muhammad himself come to cause a split in the body-politic of the Israelites or the Quresh, etc., or to unite them under the banner of Allah as a body, and lead them onward to victory and glory? At first their appearance was certainly the cause of great discord and dissension

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among the people to whom they delivered their message but gradually all of them accepted the message and became a strong nation. Hazrat Mirza Sahib did no more create dissension among the Muslims than did Jesus among the Jews and the Holy Prophet among the Quresh. Did not Jesus as he himself admits, separate father from his son and the wife from her husband and brother from brother and did not the advent of the Holy Prophet become the cause of the shedding of so much innocent blood for about 20 years by one section of the Quresh of the other section who were their own kith and kin, the blood of their blood, the bones of their bones. The Founder of the Ahmaddiyya Movement carved out a compact, solid and united community from the hopelessly divided, disunited and leaderless Muslim community. Even to-day the Muslims are split into so many religious and political sections, parties and groups, each one calling the other *Kafir* and ready to bring about the complete destruction of its rival. There never was any cohesion or solidarity among the Muslims which Hazrat Mirza Sahib desturbed or destroyed. If there is any community among the Muslims which has any solidarity, it is the Ahmadiyya community. So the Founder of the Ahmaddiyya Movement did not destroy the solidarity of the Muslims ; he created it where it did not exist.

The fourth objection of Mr. Mekki is rather ludicrous because it is foolish to say that as there exist plenty of counterfeit coins in the market, we should therefore decline to accept the genuine ones also. Because false prophets appeared after Moses, therefore the Jews were entitled to reject the message of Jesus Christ or the Holy Prophet Muhammad. God has endowed man with the faculties of thought, perception, observation and judgment so that he should exercise them and should weigh the claim of any person who claims to have been commissioned by God for the spiritual regeneration of mankind. He should seek light from heaven, as this is calculated to open his inward eyes and to grant him the power of discrimination between right and wrong. He should not condemn or reject unthinkingly the claim of all "religious adventurers" as Dr. Iqbal, in his folly, prefers to style God's elect.

The fifth objection of Mr. Mekki seems to hold some water although it does not give much indication of his serious study of

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the subject. I venture to say without fear of contradiction that many a pious Muslim sage and savant in the past, to mention only a few,—Lady Ayesha, Hazrat Abdul Qader Jilani, Hazrat Shah Waliullah, Hazrat Mohi-ud-Din Ibn Arabi, Imaum Sherani, Imam Muhammad Taher, Hazrat Mirza Jan Janan, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qasem (Founder of the Deoband Medrassah)—unanimously were of opinion that follower-prophets can and will appear as expounders and interpreters of the Islamic faith according to the needs and requirements of the time; and by the advent of such prophets Islam will be more benefited than injured. The word *Khatamannabbiyyeen* has been used by many theologians and expounders of the Holy Quran in the sense in which the Ahmadis use it. They believed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the spiritual ancestor of a line of prophets who will appear after him. I, therefore, appeal to Mr. Mekki to think seriously over the meaning of the verse in which the word *Khatamannabbiyyeen* occurs and I am sure he will be forced to revise his opinion. I have never been able to understand why our Muslim friends are so dreadfully afraid of the coming of prophets if they come only to serve Islam and establish its superiority over other religions. I see no reason why God should discontinue a practice which without any change or cessation He continued from Adam up to the Holy Prophet. The spiritual and moral needs and requirements of man are the same as they were 2,000 or 3,000 years ago. If God sent His Messengers to meet those requirements in the past, why should He refuse to send one now if the spiritual or moral condition of humanity demands it. The analogy of a perfect Law does not apply to a perfect prophet. The Perfect Law—The Quran—is with us in its pure and unadulterated form. But the Perfect Prophet died long a go and serious differences have arisen among his followers about some of the basic principles and teachings of Islam. So a prophet was needed to remove those differences and to give us back those principles and teachings which had become mulitated out of all recognition during the past 14 centuries. He was also needed to revive our faith in a living God which had become quenched in the blood of man long ago. A prophet was sorely needed and so he has come in the fulness of time. Blessed are they who have accepted him, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven though they are despised on earth.

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WHAT IS ISLAM?

"Returning to the main point of the subject under discussion, the Holy Quran has taught us two means for a perfect spiritual union with God, *viz.*, complete resignation to the Will of God which is known by the name of *Islam*, and constant prayers and supplications as taught in the opening *sura* of Al-Quran known by the name of *Fatiha*. The essence of the religious Code of Muhammadanism is contained in *Islam* and the *Fatiha*. These are two channels which lead to the fountain of salvation and the only safe guides which lead us to God. These are the only means to attain the desired end of the highest spiritual advancement and ultimate union with God. They only can find God who realize the true signification of Islam by actually entering into it and who constantly pray as taught in the *Fatiha*. What is Islam? It is the burning fire which consumes all low desires and, setting fire to the false gods, offers our life, property and honour as a sacrifice before God. Entering into this fountain we drink the water of a new life. The spiritual powers within us are united together as strongly as the links of a chain. A fire resembling that of lightning flashes out of us and a fire descends from above. These two flames coming into contact with each other consume all low motives and carnal desires and the love of others than God. A sort of death comes over the first life and this state is signified by the word of Islam. Islam brings about death over the passions of the flesh and gives new life to us. This is the true regeneration, and the word of God must be revealed to the person who reaches this stage. This stage is termed meeting of God, for it is then that a man sees the face of God. His connection with God is so strong that he, as it were, sees God with his eyes. He is granted strength from above; the internal faculties are all brightened and the magnetism of a pure heavenly life works strongly. Upon reaching this stage, God becomes his eye with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his hand with which he attacks, his ear with which he hears and his foot with which he walks."

—*The Teachings of Islam.*

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Muslims in West Africa

The following figures have been taken from *The Moslem World*, July, 1936:

(*M*=*Muslims*). (*P*=*total population*).

Territory.		1911	1911 %	1921	1921 %	1931	1931 %
Gambia	M.	115,500	76	163,000	78	168,000	80
	P.	152,500		209,000		210,000	
S. Leone	M.	114,450	8	154,900	10	219,000	12
	P.	1,403,132		1,151,300		1,763,300	
Gold Coast Colony	M.	10,500	1·6	18,300	1·6	25,163	1·6
	P.	648,000		1,143,000		1,571,000	
Ashanti	M.	4,600	1·6	6,500	1·6	9,873	1·6
	P.	287,800		407,000		578,000	
N. Terrs	M.	7,200	2	10,600	2	17,465	2
	P.	360,600		527,900		717,275	
Total Gold Coast	M.	22,300	1·8	35,400	1·8	52,501	1·8
	P.	1,504,000		2,078,043		2,866,715	
N. Nigeria	M.	6,117,500	65	6,700,000	67	7,549,275	66
	P.	9,250,000		10,000,000		11,435,000	
S. Nigeria	M.	424,000	5·4	443,700	5·5	463,000	5·6
	P.	7,855,000		8,000,000		8,168,000	
Total Nigeria	M.	6,541,500		7,143,700		8,012,275	
	P.	17,105,000		18,000,000		19,603,000	
Portuguese Guinea	M.	45,600	20	58,000	20	73,200	20
	P.	228,000		289,000		364,900	
Liberia	M.	200,000	17	200,000	17	200,000	17
	P.	1,200,000		1,200,000		1,200,000	
Senegal	M.	750,000	62	850,000	70	1,235,000	78
	P.	1,172,000		1,221,000		1,584,000	
Non-desert Fr. Sudan	M.	444,000	22	530,000	26	710,000	28·9
	P.	2,005,000		2,074,000		2,455,000	

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Upper Volta	M.	400,000	13·7	444,000	14·9	478,000	15·2
	P.	2,900,000		2,974,000		3,080,000	
Fr. Guinea	M.	899,400	51	951,000	53	1,245,000	55
	P.	1,763,000		1,874,600		2,237,000	
Ivory Coast	M.	72,500	6·4	100,000	6·4	119,400	6·4
	P.	1,133,000		1,546,000		1,866,000	
Dahomey	M.	49,000	7·7	65,000	7·7	86,000	7·7
	P.	640,000		842,000		1,112,000	
Togoland	M.	31,500	3·2	32,000	3·2 (?)	32,000	3·2 (?)
	P.	996,000		(?)1,032,000		1,032,000	
Cameroons	M.	500,000	20	530,000	21 (?)	559,000	22
	P.	2,540,000		(?)2,600,000		2,697,000	

* * * * * *

Literature under Nazi Dictatorship

The Pope issues every year a list of books which his followers are not allowed to read. The Quran generaly heads that list. There could be no greater testimony to the irresistible charm of the Quran than this permanent interdiction. Till Hitler came into power in Germany it was the exclusive prerogative of Christ's Vicar to issue such interdictions But now this special 'Divine' right has been encroached upon by the Fuehrer. The Germans are not allowed to read what they want to read but they have to read what they are commanded to read and the German Government issues now and then the names of authors whose works the Germans are not to touch. It generally is a fairly long list. There could be no greater outrage on the intellectual freedom of a people than the issuing of such periodical interdictions. The following extracts from Ruth Norden's article in the *The Living Age* will be read with interest :—

> "These lists, of course, barred the works of 'Marxists Jews, and traitors' from the very beginning. Lately, however, innumerable authors of world fame have begun to be included, authors to whom the afore-mentioned epithets cannot possibly be applied.
>
> "Frank Wedekind, Guy de Maupassant, Blazac and Zola are on this index. The case of Zola is of considerable interest. The Nazis at one time actually enlisted him as

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one of their own and hooted at over-zealous librarians who had consigned the great Frenchman to the locked bookcase. But to-day *Zola* is once more anathema.

"Hermann Hesse, one of Germany's finest and most cultivated writers, has been banned, as have been Romain Rolland, Andre Gide, Jean Giono, James Joyce, Theodore Dreiser, and Richard Hughes. Others included are D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, J. B. Priestley, Alfred Neumann, Leonhard Frank, Thomas Mann, and Franz Werfel. Foreign names are conspicuous on the lists, confirming the impression that the Nazis are deliberately isolating Germany from the main streams of European culture. No sense or system is evident in the selection of names, and even on the flimsiest pretexts are dispensed with.

"In the case of a considerable number of authors the critic is entirely at a loss to explain their exclusion. These include: Rabindranath Tagore, Jules Romains, Baudelaire, Anatole France, Marcel Proust, Pirandello, Hemingway, Huxley, Claude Anet, Colette, and such harmless native writers as Bonsels and Rosegger.

* * * * * *

The Decay of the Hindus

That the Hindus are rapidly decaying in India is apparent from the following figures taken from Sharad Trimbak Karnik's article in *The Indian Review* :

	Increase per cent. 1921—1931	Females 15—45 per 1000 Males 20—50.
Christians	... 32	1,080
Muslims	... 13	1,026
Hindus	... 10	897 (after excluding widows)

	Population in 1931 (000's omitted)	Variation per cent. 1921—31	1881—1931
Hindus	... 239,195	+10·4	+26·8
Muslims	... 77,678	+13·0	+55·0
Christians	... 6,297	+32·5	+238·1

There are in the Hindu population 54,473,448 females of reproductive age to 51,450,266 males, that is, an excess of 3 millions or 1,059 females to 1,000 males. If what the Sex writers say is true, these figures should be favourable for the rapid growth of the Hindu population. But this enviable excess, which is so desirable and beneficial for the rapid growth of the race, is reduced to a

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deficiency by the horrifying number of widows. The following table tells a sad tale :—

Widows Aged	1921	1931	Variation per cent.
0—1	597	1,081	81
1—2	494	1,342	172
2—3	1,257	2,695	114
3—4	2,837	7,078	150
4—5	6,707	11,471	71

Widows Aged 15—40 (Age of Reproduction)

1921	...	... 5,817,781
1931	...	... 5,981,096

The number of old widows does not affect the population, for they are past the age of reproduction. But the numerous youthful widows who, under the strictures of society, cannot marry, accentuate the problem. Dr. Hutton, the Census Commissioner, estimates the number of widows at the reproductive age at 8,313,773, that is, the excellent surplus is reduced to a deficiency of no less a staggering figure than 5 millions.

* * * * * *

Muslim deputation waits on the Viceroy

The whole Muslim world is very much concerned over the state of affairs in Palestine. The British Government has flatly refused to stop or suspend further Jewish immigration into that Arab country and seems resolved to crush by military force all expression of resentment by the Arabs about an enactment which has already done an immeasurable harm to the Arabs and is calculated to make Palestine a real National Home for the Jews by converting the Arab majority into a minority. A representative deputation of the Indian Muslims recently waited on the Viceroy to convey through him to the British Government their deep anxiety over the turn the affairs in Palestine has taken. We give below a summary of the address :

"Feelings of great anxiety and perturbation have been expressed at the meetings of Muslims held in almost every part of India, in which the news of the dispatch of British armies to crush the legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine and to put down, by force of arms, the agitation among the Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, against a definite wrong done to them by the Balfour Declaration and its continuance by enforcing its observance upon an unwilling and protesting people, has been greatly resented and all sections of Muslims have joined in it. The Geneva Convention, which brought into existence the principle of Mandates, definitely provided that 'The wishes of these communities (to be brought under

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mandatory control) must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory' (Article XXII of the Convention). But in the case of Palestine people the Mandate has been enforced against the wishes of the people, and these people, who have been smarting under this injustice, are being repressed and put down by military force.

"The Muslims of India have repeatedly been assured of the inviolability of sacred places of Islam and the rights and privileges of the people of Holy Lands, wrested from the Caliph, and they are keenly perturbed over the casting aside of a long series of pledges most solemnly given. Instead of defending against foreign invaders, the British Government have helped and encouraged the invasion of Palestine by alien Jews and defended those foreigners against the native population.

"Your Excellency is aware that the Palestine Arabs have, from the very beginning, protested against the British Mandate there, because it inaugurated a policy morally wrong in their country. From the beginning of 1919 down to the present day their demand for a representative independent Government, abrogation of the Mandate and the stoppage of Jewish immigration has been repeated.

"The recent reported resignation of the British High Commissioner and other British officials in Palestine clearly points out the weakness of the position taken up by Great Britain. And despite the vast propaganda organized by the Jews and no counter-propaganda done by the Palestine Arabs, British public opinion is against the British policy, as was evidenced by the strong comments in the London Press in August, 1922, when the Arab delegation visited England.

"The History of the Peace Conference of Paris admitted that the Balfour Declaration 'was most definitely a war measure' intended to rally 'the world Jewry as a whole on the side of the Entente." And while the British Mandate of Iraq terminated long ago, and the French Mandate of Syria has also given place to a responsible indigenous Government there, the Palestine Mandate under Great Britain not only continues, but is further strengthened and held by iron claws. And, what is worse still, is that measures not contemplated in the terms of Mandate, and even in contravention of these terms, are being adopted to coerce the people of Palestine into becoming homeless and landless in their own country. It was clearly understood at the time when the Balfour Declaration was made that only Jews affected by the War would be settled in Palestine, but now Jews driven out from Germany, or not wanted in other countries, are also brought there and placed in a position as to exert pressure to squeeze out the native population. And it is not only the capitalist Jews who

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are migrated there, but even workers and labourers, so that, in any development of industrial or economic enterprises, only Jews are employed in all capacities and not an Arab labourer or worker is seen in any Jewish colonies.

"It is loudly proclaimed that the price of land has gone up in Palestine since the advent of Jews there. But the fact is that Arabs are forced to sell lands to Jews to pay up Government dues, for which no remission or postponement is allowed, and the tax collectors do not leave their victims unless they have sold their lands to the Jews. Thus by coercion, pure and simple, the indigenous population is being made landless.

"Such persecutions and coercive measures adopted in Palestine are a blot on civilization and their association with the fair name of Great Britain is unthinkable. We therefore pray, in the name of politics as well as humanity and fairplay, that His Majesty's Government will be pleased to do justice, by the people of Palestine, by forthwith abrogating the war measure of the Balfour Declaration, terminating the Mandate, helping in the establishment of a responsible Government in Palestine and permitting the people to live peacefully in the country and discharge their duty by religion and humanity."

The Viceroy's reply was not at all convincing.

The Ahmadiyya Movement

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THE Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets he came to serve and reinterpret the final and eternal teachings laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the true and real Islam and seeks to uplift humanity and establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, under whose direction the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

(1) THE LONDON MOSQUE, 63, Melrose Road,
Southfields, London, S. W. 18, England.

(2) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM,
56 E. Congress St., Suite 1307,
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. America.

(3) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
P. O. Box 39, Salt Pond,
Gold Coast, West Africa.

(4) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Rose Hill, Mauritius.

(5) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
P. O Box 727, Lagos,
Nigeria, W. Africa.

(6) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Box No. 305, G. P. O.
Perth, W. Australia.

(7) THE CENTRAL (E.A.) AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM ASSOCIATION,
P. O. Box No. 554, Nairobi
(Kenya Colony).

(8) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Palestine.

(9) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Oetœsan Ahmadiah,
Defensielijn V/d Bosch, No. 139, Batavia Centrum, Java.

(10) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Oetœsan Ahmadiyya
Padang—(Sumatra).

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